1927

REV. ARTHUR O'LEARY's

ADDRESS

TO THE

LORDS SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL

OF THE

PARLIAMENT OF GREAT BRITAIN;

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED,

AN ACCOUNT OF

SIR HENRY MILDMAY's

BILL

RELATIVE TO NUNS.

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TO THE

LORDS SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL

IN THE

PARLIAMENT OF GREAT BRITAIN,

THE

MOST HUMBLE ADDRESS

OF THE

REV. ARTHUR O'LEARY.

My Lords,

WHEN I have the honour to addreſs the moſt auguſt Aſſembly on earth, and under the impreſſion which injured honour muſt feel from an unmerited and horrid accuſation that implies whatever can diſgrace the human heart, and changes a Chriſtian Clergyman into an Infernal Being, even before he is ſtripped of the ſpoils of mortality, I cannot be ignorant of the delicacy of my ſituation, leſt conſcious but defenceleſs rectitude

ſhould tempt me, even in the moſt agitated frame of mind, to make uſe of any unguarded word, which, though inadvertently, may give the ſlighteſt offence.

But in bringing the complaints of injured honour into the ſanctuary of honour itſelf, I claim your Lordſhips' indulgence if I preſume to introduce myſelf under the deſignation which points out my perſon and character, to ſuch members of your illuſtrious body as I have not the honour of being known to.

I am a Catholic Clergyman, a native of Ireland, well known in that kingdom for having inculcated loyalty to my Sovereign, and ſubordination to the laws, in the moſt critical times, by my writings, my ſermons, and example. For the truth of this aſſertion I could refer to the ſpeeches delivered in the Iriſh Houſe of Commons on a former occaſion, and to the kingdom at large. Nor was my loyalty the effect of imperious neceſſity, or time-ſerving policy; for in France, where in conſequence of barbarous and Gothic laws, I was forced in my early days

to ſeek for a ſmall portion of that education which I had been refuſed in the land of my fathers, where the youth of Europe had been inſtructed gratis, in the time of Ireland's ſplendor. In France, where the Catholics of Ireland had ſeminaries and convents, with full admiſſion to all the degrees and honours of her Univerſities, I reſiſted every ſolicitation to enliſt any of the ſubjects of theſe kingdoms in the French King's ſervice, though I had then every opportunity, being appointed to ſuperintend priſons and hoſpitals, during the wars of fifty-ſeven, &c. until about the arrival of the then Duke of Bedford in Paris. It was my intereſt to recommend myſelf to the favour of people in power, and conſequently, more my intereſt to become a courtier than a moraliſt. Saint Paul calls God to witneſs when he aſſerts the truth, I can do the ſame when I aſſert that conſcience was the rule of my conduct; and, whatever the uninformed may think of my creed, I would not perjure myſelf for all the Crowns and Sceptres on earth.

Thus far I thought it incumbent on me to ſay ſomething of myſelf, in order to ſhew that not a ſingle feature in my character correſponds with the picture, of the exhibition whereof, I have ſuch room to complain. I have taken the oath of allegiance to his Majeſty with the reſt of the Catholic Clergy of Ireland. As then we are amenable to Government and fulfil our part of the covenant, we think ourſelves entitled to the protection of the laws both as to our perſons and honour. Our perſons have been hitherto ſecure from inſult. How long they may be ſo is uncertain, if the public can believe that we anſwer the deſcription given of us in a ſhort publication to which the editor has prefixed the name of a very conſiderable perſon, who is preſumed to know the ſtate of Ireland, or who ought to know it better. For if our lineaments bear even the ſlighteſt reſemblance to the portrait he is ſaid to have drawn, we ought to be ſwept from ſociety as ſerpents horrid to ſight, and peſts deadly to human nature. And as to honour, if what this publication ſets forth be true, we have by far leſs claim to it than the Cartouches, or Bagſhots. For the publication, after enlarging

upon

upon the *civilization* and other happy effects of the *Union of Ireland with Great Britain*, reckons, amongſt others, the following remarkable one: "*It will entice the Clergy to more conſtant reſidence, by which means the pernicious influence of the vagrant Catholic Prieſt, who goes about ſelling abſolutions for felonies, and all ſorts of crimes, even murder itſelf, would be leſſened and in a great meaſure done away.*"

Horrid and barbarous accuſation! which deſcribes the Catholic Prieſts of Ireland as the moſt deteſtable of the human race, venders of ſacrilege, profanation, murder and felony; and their flocks, as ſo many licenſed criminals and patentees of guilt, in purchaſing their abſolutions for the perpetration of the moſt horrid deeds. *The vagrant Catholic Prieſts ſelling abſolutions for felonies, all ſorts of crimes, even murder.*

I am as great a friend to the Union, and have reconciled, I believe, as many to it, as the perſon to whom the publication is attributed. I am a friend to it from, as I imagined, a well-founded expectation, that

it

it will close the tumultuary scenes which have distracted my ill-fated country for ages; and make the natives, of every religious description, happy: a people *united*, not in a league against Great Britain, but *united* with her and amongst themselves in interest, prosperity, and power; by a free and equal participation of all benefits and advantages arising in the state, and by the removal of those jealousies which ever subsist between kingdoms or states, standing in the same relation to each other as England has stood hitherto with respect to Ireland—the one subordinate to the other, and governed by viceroys, and both but half united. Divisions, jealousies, and their concomitant evils, must be the natural consequence. Such was the state of Norway, with regard to Denmark, until united. Such was the state of Portugal with regard to Spain, and of Flanders, with regard to Austria, until separated. And such would be the state of Ireland, with regard to England, until wedded together in the bands of a close and intimate union; or divorced from each other by a solemn and irrevocable deed of separation. For the calamities of Ireland are not originally and radically owing to difference in religious opinions.

ons. The kingdoms and ſtates above-mentioned profeſſed the ſame creed. There is nothing unſociable in the character of Iriſhmen, any more than in the character of Germans; amongſt whom, in ſome places, Lutherans, Calviniſts, and Catholics perform their reſpective worſhip, on Sundays, in the ſame church. Amidſt ſuch a multiplicity of penal laws, ſome of which perſecuted the dead body to the grave, in forbidding, under certain penalties, to bury any Catholic in the ruins of any old abbey, though built ages before by his anceſtors; no Catholic could ſcarce have breathed outſide the bars of a jail, had it not been for the liberality of our Proteſtant neighbours, who were too generous to enforce them. All the liberal-minded Proteſtants in Ireland are for the emancipation of the Catholics to this very day. And ſuch as are under any biaſs now, would ſoon give up their prejudices, or rather, would never have indulged any, if the law had made no diſtinction.

Long before the magic ſound of *Proteſtant and Papiſt*, like the Trojan trumpet, had given the ſignal to marſhal them as hoſtile

tile armies againſt each other, on account of their creeds — an inſidious and deſtructive policy was at a loſs how to divide the natives of Ireland after they had ſheathed the ſword, and coaleſced into one extenſive and friendly family. It had not then the plea of difference of religion, for their religion was the ſame; nor the plea of intereſt, for it is the intereſt of the inhabitants of the ſame land to live in peace and harmony. At laſt it compaſſed, by playing on the paſſions, what it could not have effected by either religion or intereſt.

The Iriſh nobility and gentry of the Mileſian race wore long beards, in which they gloried; the Government of that time got an act of parliament paſſed, called the *Glib Act*; whereby every Iriſh nobleman, of Engliſh or Norman extraction, was to forfeit the privileges of his original country if he did not ſhave the upper lip. Thus the warlike fools renewed the bloody conteſt, for the ſplitting of a hair, with as much fury as the two famous factions, in the reign of Juſtinian, quarrelled on account of the colour of their clothes; or as the ſectaries of Ali and Omer

Omar fight, to this very day, about the orthodox cut that ſhould be given to a Mahometan's beard. And I conſider ſuch of the Proteſtants and Catholics of Ireland full as great fanatics and fools as the former, if their creed be the cauſe of their quarrel; not that I am ſuch a latitudinarian as to believe all religions alike. But true religion, inſtead of inſpiring hatred and rancour, commands us to love and pity thoſe who are in error.

The fleecy beard, and the *glib* or ſmooth lip, were both forgotten, a few years after the Reformation, in the appellation of *Proteſtant and Papiſt*; and thus the ſame ſanguinary ſyſtem has been continued, with few interruptions, for too long a time, to the deſtruction of a kingdom, which, from its happy ſituation, the commodiouſneſs of its harbours, the temperature of its climate, the fertility of its ſoil, the manly and generous diſpoſitions of its inhabitants, would realize whatever poets have feigned concerning Fortunate Iſlands and Heſperian Gardens. To do away the jealouſy which may hereafter operate to the ſame deſtructive effect, by playing off the

natives againſt each other to their mutual provocation and obſtruction to the happineſs and proſperity of their common country, was the chief motive which influenced my mind in recommending *the Union*, as the only effectual preventive.

As to the happy effect of the Union, by making the reſidence of the clergy a check in the *pernicious influence of the vagrant Catholic prieſt, who ſells his abſolutions for all ſorts of crimes:* it is as fancifully imagined as it is *delicately* expreſſed. The parſon hereby aſſumes the office of an exciſeman, to ſeize the *contraband abſolutions* of the prieſt, who becomes a ſmuggler.—A well-conceived plan for increaſing the revenues of Ireland, and refining the *manners* of her inhabitants! The Proteſtant and Catholic Clergy of Ireland have lived together, for years, in the habits of freedom and friendſhip; when, by the laws of the country, the latter were doomed to tranſportation for performing their religious functions: the clergy of the eſtabliſhed church never turned informers, *nor applied to members of Parliament, for the purpoſe of ſwelling with*

new

new laws the enormous penal code, on account of literary diſputes. It is not from each other they have any thing to fear. But both have every thing to dread from the diſciples of the New Philoſophy, which has made a rapid progreſs amongſt their reſpective flocks. At the root of this ſyſtem, and not againſt any branch of the Chriſtian religion, which profeſſes obedience to the laws, the axe of power ſhould be laid; and nothing cheriſhes the growth of infidelity more, than publications, which tend to expoſe the paſtors to the deriſion and contempt of thoſe who were accuſtomed, and whoſe duty it was, to reſpect them.

It is needleſs to have recourſe to France, where the *prieſts'* caſſock began to be conſidered by the higher orders as an antiquated dreſs; and the lower claſſes, who afterwards burnt the caſtles, and ſhed the blood of theſe nobles, learned diſreſpect for their teachers from their example. Ireland has of late afforded but too melancholy an inſtance of the truth of this remark. The habit of reſpect and ſubmiſſion to their clergy, was in ſuch a manner an earneſt

pledge of the obedience of the common people to the ſtate, that amidſt ſo many wars and rebellions, ſince the Revolution until the deſtruction of monarchy in France, Ireland was not one ſingle hour tainted with the ſpirit of rebellion. Lord Cheſterfield, on his return from his viceroiſhip, informed George II. that he had met in Ireland but *two dangerous Papiſts*, of whom *his Majeſty ſhould be aware :*—two ladies, of the name of Devereux, who had danced at the Caſtle on the King's-birth night. All the Vicerois of Ireland, from Lord Cheſterfield to Earl Camden, could have made much a ſimilar anſwer, if interrogated concerning what is called the *danger of Popery*.

If a number of the common people, in ſome counties, were ſeduced from the peaceable line of conduct which they had hitherto purſued, the chief cauſe will, as it ought to be, aſcribed to their diſobedience to their paſtors; in conſequence of the induſtrious propagation of Tom Paine's *pernicious* principles, and the artifices of people of power and conſequence, of a religion, if any they had, different from the Catholic perſuaſion.

Other

Other collateral cauſes can be aſſigned, which it is the province of the impartial hiſtorian to detail, when he lays open the hidden ſprings of public tranſactions. But means were uſed to weaken the confidence of the people in their paſtors; by repreſenting them as ſo many impoſtors, leagued with government, for their oppreſſion *.

In the American war, when the combined fleets of France and Spain were riding triumphant in the Britiſh channel, all the Engliſh forces engaged beyond the Atlantic, and Ireland deſtitute of any regular defence, except a few diſmounted dragoons, the loyal and peaceable conduct of the common people, attentive to the inſtructions of their paſ-

* This is ſo true, that the United Iriſhmen univerſally execrate the Catholic Clergy, as concurring both to diſunite and to prevent any acceſſion of ſtrength by their ſermons and paſtoral inſtructions: and impute partly the fruſtration of their plans to theſe very prieſts ſo cruelly libelled by others, from whom more candour and juſtice might be expected. The clergy of both religions muſt ſtand or fall together. In all appearance, had the rebellion ſucceeded, there would be none but Conſtitutional Prieſts and Miniſters, as immoral as their Republican flocks.

tors,

tors, could be equalled only by the union and exertions of the higher orders for the protection of the kingdom.

Many inſtances could I adduce, in which the peaceful voice of the prieſt was more effectual to quell riots and diſturbances, than the thunder of the cannon could have been. In proportion as *this influence is weakened* in a kingdom ſituated as Ireland is, the ſpirit of inſubordination and infidelity will ſtrengthen. Remove the reſtraints of religion from men of ſtrong paſſions, irritable diſpoſitions, and deſperate courage. Let the *influence of their prieſts be deſtroyed*, they will become infidels. The kingdom will be then chiefly divided between the infidels of the South, who will have no religion, and the Diſſenters of the North, whoſe religion breathes freedom and independence in hierarchical government.

The maxim laid down by Doctor Law, a Proteſtant biſhop, equally eminent for learning and liberality, is by far more conſiſtent with Chriſtianity and ſound policy. *By far the greateſt part of my dioceſans*, ſaid this illuſtrious prelate, *are of the Roman Catho-*

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lic perſuaſion. I cannot make good Proteſtants of them, I wiſh to make good Catholics of them; and with this intention I put into their hands the works of Doctor Gother, an eminent Catholic divine.

If Doctor Law's maxim be followed—if, inſtead of having the people eternally harraſſed on the ſcore of religion, every one reſts in peace under his own vine and fig-tree, a Catholic prieſt, reſpected by his flock, will be a ſafer guard to a Proteſtant clergyman, than a regiment of well-diſciplined ſoldiers.

Let us uncatholiciſe France, ſaid Mirabeau; *otherwiſe we can never eſtabliſh a Republican government.* It is then much ſafer for the ſtate to continue the Catholic Cathechiſm in the hands of the common people, who are accuſtomed to it, than to expoſe them to the danger of having Tom Paine's Age of Reaſon ſubſtituted in its room. And his Majeſty will be more ſecure on his throne, when a Catholic clergyman recommends him, and the Royal Family, to God in his memento at the altar; than when a fifth-monarchy man, after reading

reading in his bible, *thou ſhalt bind their kings in chains, and their nobles in fetters of iron*, acknowledges no king but *King Jeſus*; or, when regicides inſcribe on the muzzles of their guns, *Lord, thou wilt open my lips, and my mouth ſhall ſing forth thy praiſe.*—The hiſtory of England affords but too many melancholy proofs of it.

As to the bleſſings of *civilization* which are to be extended to Ireland by the *Union*, any inſinuation that the Iriſh ſtand in need of it more than their neighbours, muſt hurt their pride.

I ſuppoſe he means the lower orders of the people of Ireland. All philoſophical and unprejudiced travellers, who have obſerved with attention their cuſtoms and manners, acknowledge that they ſurpaſs the lower orders of any other country, in generoſity, wit, vivacity, manlineſs, and civility. It is not at St. Giles, or Wapping, where their manners and morals are vitiated by the contagion of example, that the character of the lower orders of the Iriſh is to be known. It is in the inland and mountainous parts of Ireland,

Ireland, where bare-footed boys ſtudy the claſſics; and where the civility of the common people to ſtrangers, and to each other, diſtinguiſhes them as much from Dutch boors, and the ruſtics of other countries, as education diſtinguiſhes a well-bred man from a clown. It is not *civilization* but bread and employment they ſtand in need of. And if it be true, that language and muſic were the firſt civilizers that ſoftened the ſavage manners of unpoliſhed man; it ſeems, from the *inharmonious ſtile* of the author of a publication, which identifies, by a grammatical appoſition, a *Catholic prieſt* and a *vagrant*—that he has not ſuch a ſtock of *civilization* to ſpare, as to be enabled to divide it with others without impoveriſhing himſelf. Though his rank in life entitles him to range in thoſe circles, one of whoſe firſt rules is that of *good breeding*, if the name which the editor has prefixed to the publication be not fictitious.

The Catholic clergy of Ireland, my Lords, are not *vagrants*. They claim their deſcent from the moſt ancient and noble families in that kingdom; and, though pride of birth

attaches no conſequence either to their perſons or profeſſion, in the eyes of the patrons of *liberty and equality*, yet it muſt have weight with your Lordſhips. For in Monarchies, where, according to Monteſquieu, there muſt be gradations of ranks, and nobles, like your Lordſhips, whoſe titles and privileges are deſcendible to their poſterity, a certain regard muſt be paid to lineage and pedigree; and if the day ſhould ever happen (which heaven avert) when the gentleman ſhould be confounded with the clown, and *the prieſt with the vagrant*, away with the coronet and the armorial bearings. My name is *Equality*, ſaid the late Duke of Orleans. The unhappy man propheſied!—His head fell, with *equal honour*, from the edge of the guillotine into the ſame baſket with the head of the *ſans-culotte*. If then the author of the worſe than illiberal publication, alluded to in this addreſs, be that man of conſequence, whoſe name the editor has prefixed to it, he forgets himſelf, and the regard due to dignity of rank, and the rules of common decency, when he treats gentlemen of family, and of a liberal education, ſuch as the Catholic

clergy

clergy of Ireland, with millions of times leſs ceremony than it would be in his power to treat a pilfering crew of ſtrolling gipſies. —*The vagrant Catholic prieſt, ſelling his abſolutions for all ſorts of crimes, felonies, &c. &c.*

The anceſtors, my Lords, of the Catholic clergy of Ireland, had the religion which the Chriſtian world profeſſed, and the eſtates and caſtles of their fathers, ages before Tudors or Stuarts had aſcended the Britiſh throne. From the contemporary hiſtorians of their own and of other nations, and ancient monuments daily reſcued from ruins and watery waſtes, their character muſt be drawn; not from Hume, and ſimilar hiſtorians, as unfaithful in their narratives with regard to Ireland, as they are infidels with regard to revelation.

Amidſt the various changes that happened in Europe, the deſcendants of thoſe Catholics preſerved their religion, which perſecution contributed to rivet deeper into their minds; as, the more the wind attempted to ſtrip the traveller of his cloak, the cloſer he

held it. But their eſtates and caſtles they loſt ſooner than renounce their duty to God, and their allegiance to their kings; one of whom had the baſe ingratitude to confirm to Cromwell's ſoldiers, tinged with his royal father's blood, the lands of the nobility and gentry who had fought his father's battles and his own *.

In addition to our loſſes under the uſurpation of Cromwell, and ſubſequent ones at the Revolution, our moſt invaluable privileges were ſwept away at a political game of hazard, played by Whigs and Tories under the laſt of the Stuarts, without the ſlighteſt provocation on our part. For the laws framed in Queen Anne's reign againſt the Catholics of Ireland, are of ſo horrid a complection, that it was never the intention of thoſe who deviſed them to have them enacted—their very cruelty was the only motive for inventing them.

Queen Anne, whoſe father had been a mendicant, ſupported by the generoſity of a

* The wills and deeds of numbers of theſe forfeitures are depoſited in the Britiſh Muſeum.

foreign

foreign king, was ſuſpected of wiſhing that her brother, a Catholic prince, ſhould ſucceed her. The party, to whom her miniſters were obnoxious, intended to draw on them the odium of purpoſing to place the Pretender on the throne. With this view, they framed a code of laws, authoriſing the neighbour to plunder the neighbour, the brother to ſupplant the brother, and the profligate ſon to ſtrip the father of his eſtate and to make him tenant for life, only by taking an oath of abjuration; with a variety of other penal clauſes equally cruel and unjuſt. The very ſeverity of laws, claſhing with thoſe of God and nature, gave them every room to believe that they would be oppoſed by the court party, from principles of humanity and juſtice. And thus they flattered themſelves with the ſucceſs of an expedient calculated to expoſe their opponents to the hatred entertained at the time againſt thoſe who were deemed the friends of the *Pope and the Pretender*.

The ſhrewd courtiers, aware of the deſign of their antagoniſts, and, either willing to ſacrifice juſtice and humanity to their perſonal

ſonal intereſt, or flattering themſelves that the laws would be but of ſhort duration, in the event of the ſucceſs of their plan, unexpectedly gave into the meaſure, to remove the ſuſpicion of their deſign. It was too late for the other party to recede; and thus, in time of profound peace, in violation of a ſolemn compact, ſanctioned by the laws of nations, the Catholics of Ireland, like balls in a tennis-court, ſtruck with the rackets of both parties, were thrown over the walls of the conſtitution of their country, againſt the original intention of the ſtate gameſters.

If rulers and ſtateſmen long ſince reſolved into their original duſt, have handed down to us reſtraints and diſqualifications as a legal inheritance, it is their fault and our misfortune, but not a reaſon which authoriſes thoſe to whom the deſtinies have been more propitious, to aggravate our calamities by loading us with groſs ſlander, and worſe than degrading epithets, *venders of murders, and purchaſers of felonies.* Neither is this an age for the triumphs of overbearing contempt towards the deſcendants of the victims of the revolutions of former times, when

Europe

Europe is threatened with a more extraordinary revolution than that which has reduced the Catholics of Ireland to their preſent ſituation.

Solomon ſaid, in his time, *nothing new under the Sun.* About a century and half ago England's King was brought to the ſcaffold, her princes and nobles, and other loyaliſts, emigrants in France and other countries, where they were hoſpitably received, as the emigrants of thoſe countries are now in their turn generouſly received in England, and in deriſion of the peerage draymen, were placed by an uſurper, in that very houſe where your Lordſhips ſhine with ſuch luſtre.

Little was it expected, about a century ago, when a prince of the houſe of Orange was ſeated on the Britiſh Throne, after having placed a guard over James the Second, his father-in-law, in the Palace of Hampton Court, that his ſucceſſor in the Stadholderſhip of Holland, dethroned by his rebellious ſubjects, would be under the neceſſity of taking up his reſidence in the very ſame palace where

where a King of England had been a kind of priſoner before : an awful inſtance of the viciſſitudes of human affairs, which ſhould inſpire princes themſelves with humanity and compaſſion for the oppreſſed—when they not only know that they are doomed to die as other mortals, but moreover expoſed, from the inconſtancy of fortune, to ſurvive their power. *Go*, ſaid Marius, once the maſter of Rome, and conqueror of the Cimbré, *go and tell the governor of Africa, that you have ſeen Marcius periſhing with hunger on the ruins of Carthage*, alluding to the inſtability of human grandeur, in the downfall of ſuch a powerful ſtate, and the change of his own fortune.

When we ſee kingdoms and empires fall, as it were, upon one another—when we ſee kings and queens a few years back the idols of their ſubjects, eclipſing in ſplendor the pomp and magnificence of Oriental grandeur—when we ſee them bleeding on ſcaffolds, and their bodies deprived of thoſe funeral rites which decency owes to humanity, we are convinced that uncertainty, inconſtancy, and agitation are the proper portions

of

of all ſublunary affairs; and that the greateſt abuſe of power is to triumph and inſult over oppreſſed innocence.

The Catholic clergy of Ireland ſhould not then be ſingled out as objects of defamation and invective, for having fallen victims to thoſe reverſes of fortune to which crowned heads, princes, and nobles are expoſed. In their poverty they have birth and honor, which neither revolutions nor penal laws can affect. No immoral man is ever allowed to officiate at their altars. When their prelates, who are ever watchful over the inferior clergy, diſcover any who depart from the line of duty required by the ſanctity of their profeſſion, they ſuſpend or excommunicate them, and thus cut them off from the communion of the Catholic church.

The ſame laws that encouraged the ſon to diſobey and ſtrip the Catholic father of his property, encouraged the refractory clergyman to ſet the injunctions and admonitions of his biſhop at defiance, by taking the oath of abjuration: for, as an encouragement to outward conformity, the laws of Ireland al-

low forty pounds a year to every prieſt who reads his recantation, whether he be a moral man or not.

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In a word, nothing whatever is required to become an elect of the ſtate, but the outward utterance of an oath of abjuration, whether it is believed by the perſon who takes it, or whether it belies his heart. All the puniſhments and legal diſqualifications are reſerved for the retainers of conſcious integrity, who ſacrifice all worldly intereſts ſooner than ſwear againſt the dictates of their conſcience, and thus do not chooſe to perjure themſelves, and impoſe on their neighbours. In the very ſuppoſition that they err, (which is the ſuppoſition of others, not theirs) they err in their honeſty; for no road can be right to the man who walks in it againſt conviction. And this circumſtance alone

alone is more than an ample refutation of the impious and hell-invented charge *of a Catholic Prieſt ſelling abſolutions for all ſorts of crimes, felonies, and murders:* for if there were prieſts who had ſuch commodities for ſale, and Catholics to purchaſe them, long before now the Catholic noblemen would have been ſeated in the Houſe of Peers with your Lordſhips in legiſlating for the land. Every obſtacle would be ſoon removed; one ſingle oath would be the panacea which would cure all diſorders. We ſee ourſelves excluded from all the dignities and places of emolument in the ſtate. In conſequence of this excluſion we ſee ourſelves abuſed by the very dregs and lees of the peaſantry of our country, ſuch as Doctor Duigninane, the ſon of a peaſant who had read his recantation to be ſchoolmaſter to poor children in a charity ſchool, now ranking with the ſenators of the land, and realizing in our days what Solomon complained of as one of the evils incident to human nature—*Another evil I have ſeen under the ſun, I have ſeen ſervants or beggars on horſes, and princes walking on the earth, or on foot.* Eccleſiaſtes 10. Not that I would

 reproach

reproach any man with the meanneſs of his birth, when I would ſee *Apollo crown modeſt merit.* But when a vulgar man, under the ſhield of penal laws, is continually inſulting, in the groſſeſt manner, the majority of an entire kingdom, as if they were a groupe of African ſlaves on a Weſt-India plantation, under the laſh of a brutal driver —when, on the other hand, we are told in the moſt public manner, that we have diſpenſations and abſolutions for the commiſſions of *all ſorts of crimes*, I feel ſuch a conflict within myſelf, that I am obliged to ſummon up all my religion, leſt I ſhould yield to the temptation of hating a man I am bound to forgive. I am at a loſs which to admire moſt of the two, either the power of conſcience over the heart of man, or the unaccountable ſtupidity, the perverſe and wilful blindneſs of any perſon who claims the ſlighteſt pretenſion to reaſon or good ſenſe, and yet ſeriouſly thinks that unprincipled men, licenſed by their religious principles, and authorized by their clergy to *commit all ſorts of crimes*, could heſitate one inſtant to have recourſe to ſo ſlight a remedy

medy as an oath to remove every grievance, and ſilence every obloquy.

The feelings of honor, the pride of rank, the allurements of fortune and dignities, every impulſe of the human heart, and all the motives that influence man as a member of ſociety, call aloud on us to remove the diſgraceful reſtraints that expoſe us to ſuch humiliations and obloquy. And yet, with the remedy in our hands, the churches open, and *this pretended ſtock of abſolutions*, which, according to the report of ſlander, would *ſanctify all ſorts of crimes*, we keep at a diſtance from the temple of fame, power, and ſplendor.

When the Pagans accuſed the primitive Chriſtians *of eating children at their religious aſſemblies, and riſing after ſupper to conclude all in the confuſion of inceſt*, Tertullian addreſſed his Apology to the Roman ſenate, and calls upon them to prove the truth of the fact. He appeals afterwards to the feelings of humanity, common to Pagans and Chriſtians, whether ſuch crimes could be the religion of any ſociety of mortals.

O, ſaid

O, ſaid he, *what immortal glory would a pro-conſul gain, could he pull out a Chriſtian by the ears, that had eat up a hundred children.* But we deſpair *of any ſuch glorious diſcovery.*

I call aloud upon the Viceroys of Ireland, their Secretaries, and the Judges of the land, to name or to recollect one ſingle inſtance in which a *crime, murder, or felony has been committed,* in conſequence of a prieſtly abſolution. Where was the gallows erected, on the branches of which the *abſolved murderer* and the *abſolving prieſt* were ſuſpended together—the one the perpetrator, the other the inſtigator of the crime? Or where is that nation on earth, even in times of Paganiſm, where the religion of the people authorized the *commiſſion of all ſorts of crimes?*

The Romans, who worſhipped an adulterous Jupiter, yet puniſhed adultery by the Julian law. The Senator who had offered incenſe to Bacchus could not abide his wife when he diſcovered that her breath was too fragrant with the flavour of the wine. The impure

impure Venus was a goddeſs worſhipped by the matrons of ancient Rome, yet Lucretia was chaſte. The civil magiſtrate puniſhed on earth the crimes that were worſhipped in heaven. There exiſts then in the heart of man a law which points out to him, according to the Apoſtle, his moral duty—an innate principle of juſtice and goodneſs by which, even in ſpite of the falſe maxims of his worſhip, the unregenerate Pagan condemned the immoral actions of himſelf and others.

The Catholics of Ireland, natives of a nation of heroes and an iſland of ſaints, are they to form the moſt ſingular of all exceptions to the maxims of nature, by not only ſanctifying crimes, but by alſo making them a ſaleable commodity?

We who ſpend our time in enforcing the maxims of the Goſpel, one of whoſe principal laws is a law of eternal love—who teach our flocks to relieve the diſtreſſed, without diſtinctions of ſects or countries, to return good for evil—to diſcover a brother in the face of an enemy—to embrace affliction—to ſmile under calamity—to pluck out the

eye

eye that give offence—to cut off the hand that ſcandalizes—to renounce all the honours, riches, pleaſures of this world, when they cannot be attained, but at the riſk of the ſoul, and to conſider death in grace as a paſſage to a glorious and bliſsful eternity.

Are we ſuch monſters as to be ſlaves to tenets ſo abhorrent to human nature?

I imagined, my Lords, that the ſolemn oaths and declarations of the Catholics of thoſe kingdoms, and their renunciation of theſe privileges and rights, to which they would be otherwiſe entitled, ſooner than ſwear againſt their conſciences, had ſufficiently refuted accuſations, at which nature recoils and ſhrinks with horror: but to our aſtoniſhment and ſurpriſe, our creed is not learned from ourſelves. More credit is given to a fanatical Geographer called Guthrie, than to our oaths, or the writings of our doctors. In this theological ſum, our divinity is chiefly ſtudied, and Guthrie informs his readers, that he has extracted, from a book called *Rome, the Great Cuſtom Houſe of Sin, tranſlated into Engliſh, 150 years ago, the fees*

fees of the Pope's Chancery for abſolutions. He might have ſaid, inſtead of *tranſlated* into Engliſh, *compoſed in Engliſh* originally. I never read ſuch a book in the canon law, nor ſuch fees amongſt the rules of the Pope's Chancery; however, he claſſes the fees in the following order*.

For him who ſtole conſecrated things in a holy place, ten ſhillings and ſix-pence.

For him who lays with a woman in a church, nine ſhillings.

For him that killeth father, mother, wife or ſiſter, ten ſhillings.

For him that layeth with his mother, ſiſter, or grandmother, ſeven ſhillings and ſix-pence.

This is the cheapeſt bargain a *pious* cuſtomer could expect, and I think there is good profit in dealing with the Pope, as a great

* Guthrie's Geographical Grammar, ſixteenth edition, corrected and *enlarged.* London, printed 1796.

number of other ſins are not taxed at all, ſuch *as ſleeping with a neighbour's wife, ſtealing a fat ox*, &c. Theſe are only a few grains thrown into the ſcale, when a perſon buys ſome pounds of ſugar in a grocer's ſhop. They are but pecadillos or trifles. It appears, however, that the Popes are but bad financiers in not increaſing the cuſtom houſe duties in the ſpace of 150 years, whereas every article coſts now treble what it coſt then; but eſpecially, as things riſe in value, according to their rarity, the Popes cuſtom rates were ill regulated in not charging ſixpence or a ſhilling more for the *grandmother* than for the ſiſter or granddaughter, as moſt certainly an old *Hebe*, the *grandmother of the graces*, is a greater rarity than a young woman or granddaughter. In vain ſhould we attempt to diſclaim this ludicrous and impious creed. The public are ſo accuſtomed to ſlander and miſrepreſentation, that few will believe us.

The rules of the Roman Chancery, *regulæ cancellariæ*, regard benefices, the temporalities of vacant biſhoprics, and other eccleſiaſtical matters, partly ſpiritual, partly temporal,

temporal, according to concordatunis or ſtipulations between the Apoſtolical See, and Catholic Princes. The inceſts and ſacrileges above-mentioned, inſtead of being compounded for money, would be puniſhed with death on the rack or wheel, after making the *amende honorable*, with a lighted taper held by the criminal, on his knees before the door of the church where the ſacrilege had been committed. Sixtus Quintus condemned to the Gallies, during the ſpace of five years, a nobleman for raiſing the veil of a lady whom he met in the ſtreet, and giving her a kiſs. And in vain did a polygamiſt plead that he was unfortunate in each of his wives, and for that reaſon changed them, in expectation of finding one that would pleaſe him. *As it is ſo hard to pleaſe you in this world*, replied the ſtern Pontiff, *there are more women in the other world, you muſt go there to find one to your liking*—ordered him to be tried and executed.

Thus, if *Rome be the great cuſtom of ſins*, a London printer's office is the *great cuſtom-houſe* of falſe creeds and *fictitious abſolutions*, for real abſolutions can never

be granted but upon ſincere repentance, which requires three indiſpenſable conditions: *a ſincere ſorrow for paſt ſins, a firm reſolution to guard againſt future lapſes, and every atonement in our power to the injured Deity and the injured neighbour.* Without theſe conditions, *abſolutions* are no more than the mutterings of ſorcerers, or words of incantations pronounced over a dead body, without ever imparting to it the genial heat of animation and vitality. The miniſters of religion can do no more than God has annexed to their commiſſions; and the Scriptures declare, that God will never forgive the ſinner without ſorrow and repentance, which implies a purpoſe of amendment of life.

Sacramental confeſſion then, and *prieſtly abſolution,* inſtead of being an encouragement to ſin, are in the Catholic religion the greateſt reſtraints on the paſſions. The worſt and moſt immoral Catholics are thoſe who neglect them, becauſe they prefer their paſſions to their duty. And if it be aſked, *why have recourſe to thoſe religious rites, whereas people may ſin afterwards?*

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The reaſon is, becauſe man in this life is not impeccable, on account of the changeableneſs and inconſtancy of his will. All he can do is to form the ſtrongeſt reſolutions, to lay hold on the means, which in his belief, God has appointed for his ſanctification, and to recommend himſelf to infinite mercy. Hence the caution given by the Apoſtle, *Wherefore let him that thinketh he ſtandeth, take heed leſt he fall.*

God has promiſed *to receive the ſinner whenever he would return*, without limiting the number of times. Yet to ſin in expectation of forgiveneſs, would be the moſt unjuſtifiable preſumption.—Mercy is not to be abuſed, nor is Divine Juſtice to be provoked by new prevarications and new crimes. For there are times when the meaſure is filled up, and fatal limits beyond which paternal goodneſs does not extend.

Were *prieſtly abſolution*, which is founded on the power granted by Chriſt to *remit ſins* to the penitent ſinner, a licence for guilt, it would be unjuſt to charge it on the Catholics alone — Lutherans, Greeks, Armenians,

menians, all branches of the Chriſtian religion, except Calviniſts, and the modern ſectaries ſprung from that ſtock, acknowledge this power. The Church of England, in her liturgy, recommends, acknowledges it; and lays down the form of abſolution in the very ſame words uſed by the Roman Catholic Church. The laws of the ſtate ſanction the inviolable ſecrecy which is obſerved, when the ſinner, loaded with guilt, lays open his hidden ſores to his ſpiritual phyſician; whereas the laws do not allow that what is told in confeſſion ſhould be adduced in evidence on a trial: and by a ſtatute paſſed in the reign of James I. the miniſter is degraded for ever, if he reveals the confeſſion of his penitent. But the ill-fated Catholic is the expiatory victim on whoſe head all the iniquities of the nation are laid; and, what is harmleſs in others, is criminal in him *.

* I do not write in this addreſs as a controvertiſt, or polemical divine; I only expound the Catholic belief, ſo often and ſo groſsly miſrepreſented, and whoſe miniſters are expoſed to obloquy on account of pretended *abſolution*.

The primitive fathers, in addreſſing their apologies to a pagan

It is painful to me, my Lords, thus to intrude on your time. It is the more painful, as after ſo many proofs of the loyalty, the piety, the zeal and exertions of the Catholic prelates and paſtors of Ireland, in the critical circumſtances, when there was no room for diſſimulation, or a trimming, fluctuating conduct, threats ſhould be held out for the abolition of their prieſthood, as the nurſery of *crimes, felonies, and murders.*

In addition to theſe threats, by a man of conſequence, on the eve of an union which they imagined was to cloſe the penal code with the ſeven-fold ſeal of eternal ſilence; and, at the very threſhold of the Temple of Concord, they and their flocks are juſtly alarmed to ſee the pages of the myſterious book, in which, like that mentioned by the Prophet, are written ſo many *lamentations and woes*, unfolded by a member of the Britiſh Houſe of Commons, for the purpoſe of knowing whether there be any more

a pagan ſenate, explained their belief, to vindicate it from miſrepreſentation. I have every confidence that a Chriſtian Senate will not be leſs indulgent to a Chriſtian Clergyman.

penal

penal clauſes wanting, in order to make up the deficiency, by enacting a new law which hereafter may affect their children and relatives. I mean, my Lords, Sir Henry Mildmay's bill, relative to what is called *Monaſtic Inſtitutions.*

From a coincidence of circumſtances it ſeems to appear, that the idea has been ſuggeſted to that gentleman, in conſequence of a very unintereſting diſpute between two very learned, and in all other reſpects very amiable eccleſiaſtics, Doctor Sturger, a prebendary of Wincheſter, and Doctor Milner, a Catholic hiſtorian, and member of the Society of Antiquarians, about Biſhop Hoadley's writings.

Mr. Milner has publiſhed a very learned and curious hiſtory of Wincheſter, under the ſucceſſive dynaſties of Britiſh, Saxon, and Engliſh kings, from the earlieſt records of time, down to our days. As an antiquarian he deſcribes the monuments of worthies buried in the Cathedral; as a hiſtorian he draws their characters. It is too voluminous to be read by any but by a few rich, who

who can purchaſe it. It is out of the reach of the generality of the Engliſh nation, who would be more pleaſed with Fielding's Tom Jones, or Jonathan Wild: though it for ever ranks Mr. Milner in the firſt claſs of the literary characters of the age, and ſhould rather procure him the thanks of the inhabitants of Wincheſter, for having reſcued the hiſtory of their city from the miſt and rubbiſh of antiquity, and given ſuch elegant engravings of their monuments, than the animadverſions of ſome of its eccleſiaſtical dignitaries.

Unfortunately for ſome Engliſh ladies, who, in their early days, had made vows of celibacy in France and Flanders, and had taken refuge in their native land from the poniards and guillotines of French aſſaſſins, the antiquarian, after deſcribing the monuments of ſeveral illuſtrious men in ſucceſſion, came to that of Biſhop Hoadley. This prelate, to the exception of his moral character, which was ſpotleſs, might have been called the Perigord or Gregoire of his time, with regard to his theological principles in eccleſiaſtical matters, ſubmitting religion to the

civil magiſtrates, &c. A repreſentation was drawn up againſt him, and his writings, by the lower Houſe of Convocation in 1717, as *tending to ſubvert all government and diſcipline in the church of Chriſt, and to reduce it to a ſtate of anarchy and confuſion; and as making void thoſe powers with which he himſelf was veſted, and which he was bound to exerciſe in conferring orders, inflicting cenſures, &c.*

The miniſtry of the day, with whom Biſhop Hoadley was a favourite, diſſolved the Convocation, prevented the repreſentation from being carried to the Biſhops in the higher houſe, and thus diſperſed the clouds that were thickening over Biſhop Hoadley's head.

In deſcribing his monument, as an antiquarian, it was natural for Mr. Milner to draw the prelates character as a hiſtorian; and to repreſent him in an attitude analogous to his principles, with the Bible in one hand, and Magna Charta in the other; the mitre and the cap of liberty in contact; the crozier and the pike ſet in ſaltire, or croſſing each

each other. Mr. Milner complaining that one of the pillars of the cathedral of Winchester was cut to too great a depth to make place for Biſhop Hoadley's monument, adds, *Thus Biſhop Hoadley, both living and dead, undermined the church of which he had been a prelate* *.

Doctor Sturges, as he himſelf acknowledges, had been under particular obligations to Biſhop Hoadley, and in all appearance had imbibed, if not all, at leaſt the beſt of his opinions. Gratitude and friendſhip, two of the human virtues the moſt congenial to our feelings *as men*, but often hurrying us into *exceſſes which we cannot canonize as Chriſtians*, warmed Dr. Sturges' breaſt in ſuch a manner, that he imparted a congenial heat to the embers of the dead, and reproduced on the ſtage a character who, notwithſtanding the change of ſcenes, will ever and invariably play the ſame part, which is to confuſe and perplex, to have friends and foes, and to leave the following problem to ſolve: *Whether he*

* Milner's Survey of Wincheſter.

was really and in his heart a profeſſor of the thirty-nine articles, one of which determines with the Catholic church the inſtitution of biſhops *jure divino*? Or whether he was one of thoſe accommodating ſages who, like the philoſopher of old, laid down as a rule that a wiſe man ſhould have two religions, one for himſelf, and another for the country and time in which he lives? The ſolution of this problem I leave to Dr. Sturges and Mr. Milner.

It is a problem, the ſolution whereof concerns no more the preſent generation than the religion of Grotius, on which the famous Boſſuet has written a diſſertation.

Few perſons read Hoadley, whoſe ſtyle is ſo incoherent and unentertaining, that Pope, in alluſion to the length of his periods, ſaid *Hoadley walks a mile*. To it can be applied the remark of a Roman emperor on the ſtyle of Seneca: *arena ſine calce*, ſtand without cement. Doctor Sturges, however, took offence at the character Mr. Milner had drawn of his favourite biſhop, and inſtead of confining himſelf to the point in diſpute,

diſpute, adopted the moſt effectual method of rallying round his ſtandard a hoſt of confederates, by making a general cauſe of it, and publiſhing a work under the title of *Reflections on Popery*; a theme ſo often enlarged on pro and con by the moſt eminent men the world has ever produced, that it is impoſſible to ſay any thing new on the ſubject.

Mr. Milner, as an hiſtorian, depicted the eminent men of religious orders who had reflected luſtre on the church of Wincheſter, in the ſame colours that any impartial Proteſtant hiſtorian would have done, as ſeveral of them have. He does the ſame juſtice to ſuch of the Proteſtant Biſhops of Wincheſter as deſerved to have their birth, education, learning, and virtues celebrated.

Doctor Sturges, inattentive to the labours and learning of the members of religious orders, who have preſerved the literary monuments of ancient times from the ravages of Goths and Vandals—followed the ſun in its courſe in converting barbarous nations—carried the light of the Goſpel into thoſe diſtant

diſtant climes unknown to the conquerors of the ancient and new world—brought Europe acquainted with the natural productions, the laws, the manners, cuſtoms, religions, and geography of the remoteſt regions, and enriched the republic of letters with the treaſures of literature, both ancient and modern. He overlooks the benefits they have conferred on the world, in their faſts and celibacy, which he attacks with as much vehemence and zeal as Salvian attacks the vices and diſorders of his time.

The prayers, mortification, penance of monaſtic inſtitutions, all muſt yield with Doctor Sturges to the *irreſiſtable impulſe of nature. The impulſe of nature*—the ſource of all our diſorders and miſeries, which all legiſlators on earth made it their conſtant ſtudy to reſtrain by laws and puniſhments. What made an adulterer of David? *The impulſe of nature.*——An inceſtuous of Amnon? *The impulſe of nature.*——A rebel of Abſolem? *The impulſe of nature.*—— A murderer of Cain? *The impulſe of nature.*—— What gives employment to the canoniſts and civilians of Doctor's Commons, in

in arguing the caſes of divorce? *The impulſe of nature.*——What peoples London with ſo many votaries of the Cyprian Goddeſs? *The impulſe of nature.*——What is it that brought the impure ſpirit into the body of that man concerning whom our Saviour ſaid, there is *a kind of devil which cannot be caſt out but by prayer and faſting? The impulſe of nature.*——His zeal againſt celibacy, and mortification hurries him into ſuch extremes that he blames Mr. Milner for being ſo laviſh in his encomiums on the Proteſtant Biſhops of Wincheſter, the moſt diſtinguiſhed for their virtues, though Mr. Milner quotes their monumental inſcriptions, recorded by Proteſtant authors, ſuch as Biſhop Andrews, who lived in a ſtate of celibacy. *Cælebs hinc migravit ad auriolam celeſtem*, and Biſhop Morley, amongſt whoſe many virtues is reckoned the auſterity of his life, eating but once in twenty-four hours, and riſing every morning in the coldeſt weather, and without a fire, at five o'clock.

He is never more eloquent than when he declaims againſt faſt and celibacy. In ſupport of his arguments againſt celibacy, he quotes

quotes Lucretius, an Epicurean poet and philoſopher, who invokes Venus, the goddeſs of luſt, and Walter de Mapes, an unchaſte *bon vivant*, who wrote doggerel verſes in Latin, in the twelfth century,

Meum eſt propoſitum in habenſa mori.
Vinum ſit appoſitum morientis ora *.

They are certainly the beſt authorities he could quote againſt virginal chaſtity and the mortification of the ſenſes. For he could not quote Saint Paul or the fathers againſt either one or the other. If Saint Jerome were living he would write an epiſtle to Doctor Sturges with the ſame warmth with which he wrote to Vigilantius.

The Doctor has reſerved Biſhop Hoadley's apology for an appendix, in which he makes uſe of words which, from Mr. Milner or me, would render us obnoxious to the Biſhops of both perſuaſions.

They are the following: — *As an Eccleſiaſtic, he* (Biſhop Hoadley) *withſtood the*

* Others are of opinion that de Mapes is not the author.

high

*high pretenſions of great part of the Clergy —pretenſions unauthoriſed by reaſon, maintained by a violent party ſpirit, and often employed in the moſt tumultuary and factious purpoſes to which the cry of the church was made ſubſervient**. This *cry*, which he does not ſeem to approve in the hierarchy, ſoon became the cry of ſome of the prebendaries of Wincheſter, and from them the *cry* of the public papers.

On Mr. Milner's reply, in which there is a diſſertation on Biſhop Hoadley's principles and writings, letters were written, and deputations ſent to ſome Members of Parliament. Sir Henry Mildmay brings in a Bill for the ſuppreſſion of *Monaſtic Inſtitutions*, the very words of Doctor Sturges. One would imagine that there was a kind of confederacy amongſt ſome of the editors of the public papers to ring the alarm. Not a ſingle paragraph could I have ſeen in any of them in contradiction to exaggerated falſehoods. *Two thouſand of the common people, chiefly ſervant maids, were converted*

* Sturges Reflections on Popery, p. 98.

by the French Clergy in one part of London, in the ſpace of two years; that is to ſay, more than all the Catholic Clergy of England have converted ſince the reign of Elizabeth.

The French clergy, moſtly half ſtarved and half naked poor people, in ſpite of the generoſity of government, on account of the ſmallneſs of their allowance, and the dearth of proviſions, are ill qualified for making converts. They ſleep five or ſix, or by trios, in poor places that cannot afford to have ſervant maids; they do not know Engliſh—ſervant maids do not know French. Theſe poor prieſts make their own beds, and cook their own ſoup and vegetables. I have preached in the chapels in London near twelve years, and I have not reconciled one ſingle ſervant maid to the Catholic church. More of them are debauched in London in one month, than will be converted in ten thouſand years. It were much better they were converted than caſt on the town: and little would the ſtate ſuffer if a London cinder-woman embraced the religion of ſo many empreſſes and queens.

Popery

Popery is increaſing in the dioceſe of Cheſter, ſaid another, *where forty thouſand three hundred and thirty-three perſons never go to any religious worſhip. But Popery increaſes under the influence of fifty thouſand prieſts, all men of talents.* That is to ſay, more prieſts than all the Biſhops of Europe have ordained in twenty years. Such are the methods uſed to prepare the way for the operation of a Bill which has for its object a reſtraint on the freedom of the will of a Catholic woman, who perhaps, if ſhe lived in the world would bring ſcandal on her family.

There cannot, my Lords, be any *monaſtic inſtitutions* in England under the exiſting laws, if there were as many women who would live in celibacy as there are bad women in London. For a *monaſtic inſtitution requires a monaſtery endowed*, and the ſanction of the laws of the ſtate to render the vows of the religious irrevocable; as in Catholic countries, where, if a prieſt marries, or a religious deſerts his cloiſter, he is puniſhed by the civil magiſtrate, or ſent back to his ſuperior to be puniſhed as an apoſtate.

Hence, when the monaſtic inſtitutions were diſſolved in England, the vow of celibacy ſtill remained. And Henry the Eighth, who ſent the Lady Abbeſs's gold croſs to the mint, would have doomed her body to the faggot or halter, had he perceived the bridal ring on her finger.

The Legiſlature of 91 made this diſtinction in the toleration granted to the Catholics: *it removed the penalties which attached to thoſe who would enter into any eccleſiaſtical community of the church of Rome, but not to extend to monaſtic inſtitutions:* that is to ſay, not to endow monſtaries, or incorporate their rules, ſuch as they are in Catholic countries, with the laws of the ſtate, where they are never to marry, nor return to the world: whereas here they are at liberty to renounce their vows when they think fit, and ſue for their ſhare of their family inheritance, not being here as elſewhere, *dead in law.* What are then the few Engliſh nuns now in England, or the few Iriſh nuns in Ireland, for no ladies of any other country devote themſelves there to a religious life? What are they in

the

the eyes of the law? What are they in the eyes of any man who pays the ſlighteſt attention to the ſubject? *A few Catholic females, who, from devotion, form a reſolution to die old maids, and, when tired of celibacy, can marry in ſpite of Pope or Biſhop*, as there are ſome clergymen in this kingdom and in Ireland who, after officiating at Catholic altars, have taken wives to themſelves, and exchanged the ſacerdotal cincture for the ceſtus of Venus.

If theſe ladies were ladies of pleaſure, ſeducing youth, the gentlemen of Wincheſter would not give themſelves the ſlighteſt concern about them. They are of the greateſt uſe to the Catholic nobility and gentry, who ſend their daughters to be educated by them, on account of the ſtrictneſs of their morals, their ſecluſion from the diſſipations of the world, which affords them the more time to ſuperintend the inſtruction of their ſcholars, and the facility of obſerving the ſpiritual exerciſes peculiar to the Catholic religion, ſuch as faſts, abſtinence, confeſſions, communions, &c. which could not be obſerved at other boarding ſchools; and which, though they

they may appear ridiculous to others, are held ſacred by us. In Galway, in Ireland, there are ladies of this deſcription, ſince the converſion of the kingdom to Chriſtianity in the fourth century. The parliament, however rigorous in angry times, never moleſted them, on account of their utility, by their inſtructions, beſides the policy of ſpending their money in the country. For if there were not ladies of this deſcription in the country, the Catholics would ſend their daughters to be educated abroad.

But the nuns of this country, pervert the children of Proteſtants, and the French clergy make converts.

Every enquiry has been made, and the challenge given to prove the allegation. —The enquiry proved fruitleſs, and the challenge refuſed. Upon enquiry it was found, that a Scotch lady and gentleman, going to ſome diſtant part, left their child in the care of theſe religious women, until their return. They could not have left her in better hands; for ſome of theſe ladies make a vow to attend the ſick, without diſtinction between

Turk

Turk and Chriſtian. Parents have a right to leave their children where they think fit. They take no Proteſtant boarders or ſcholars. They had at their ſchool two young miſſes, whoſe father was a Catholic, and the mother a Proteſtant. A father has a natural right over his children. For this reaſon we never baptize the children of Quakers or Jews, without the conſent of their fathers. If they were dying, beyond hope of recovery, we would not ſcruple to baptize—for death emancipates them. The father, whoſe name was Counſellor Sheridan, died laſt year: the mother took the children from Wincheſter, and ſent them to a Proteſtant boarding ſchool. It was alſo found upon enquiry, that an Iriſh regiment, in which there are a great many Catholic ſoldiers, was quartered at Wincheſter. By an act of the Iriſh Legiſlature, the Catholics of Ireland can enter into the army, and make an open profeſſion of their faith, and perform their religious worſhip. A brave man, who expoſes his life for his king and country, is entitled to the privilege of ſaying his prayers. The Abbot of Saint Galles, a Dominican Friar, and Sovereign Prince, has Calviniſt regiments,

regiments, and Calviniſt chaplains in his ſervice; and as there are ſuch numbers of Iriſh Catholics in his Majeſty's armies, but eſpecially in the navy, an edifying Catholic chaplain would contribute greatly to prevent amongſt them the contagion of immorality and Jacobiniſm. For when they do not practiſe their own religion, they will practiſe no other. Upon thoſe principles, a very worthy French clergyman, who has learned ſome ſmattering Engliſh, inſtilled into the minds of thoſe Catholic ſoldiers the principles of loyalty, morality, and good order. And ſuch, my Lords, is the ground of all this clamour about *nuns, converſions, and Popery!*

As to converſions—one Catholic lady, of an edifying life and amiable manners in the world, would make more converts than ten thouſand cloiſters. And of all religions on earth the Catholic religion is the leaſt calculated for making converts in theſe kingdoms, on account of the ſeverity of its rules. It is not ſuch an eaſy matter to prevail on a voluptuary to faſt and pray; or a libertine to renounce his criminal pleaſures; or a uſu-

rer,

rer, and others accuſtomed to accumulate a fortune by unlawful means, to make reſtitution of ill-acquired gain; or a married man, who has an unfaithful wife, to live as chaſte as a veſtal in a cloiſter, until he buries or takes her back to his boſom. Theſe and other ſacrifices muſt be made after being inſtructed in every eſſential point of the Catholic doctrine. All the ſins which the new convert can recollect muſt be told in the tribunal of penance, where the concealment of one would be a ſacrilege.

Let the ſectaries who daily ſpring up preach this doctrine—their meeting-houſes will be deſerted. It is an eaſy matter to work on the imagination, and to paſs from one belief to another, when a perſon has no fixed ſtandard or rule: but to change the heart, to triumph over the paſſions, to hate whatever we loved before, to love what we hated, is not a change ſo eaſily wrought. Let not then the Church of England, or the Prebendaries of Wincheſter, be alarmed with the number of converſions made by nuns, or Catholic miſſionaries—we have more than enough to do in keeping our own

flocks attentive to their duty. And unfortunately with regard to ſeveral of them, we can ſay with the prophet, *In vain have I laboured.* Tom Paine has made more converts in the three kingdoms in three years, than the Catholic clergy will make in twenty thouſand.

It would be happy for the kingdom if we could convert all the infidels and fanatics that ſeparate every day from the eſtabliſhed religion, and who, if an opportunity offered, would bury it with the ſtate in its ruins, as in Cromwell's time. In one place of worſhip Chriſt is expunged out of their creed. In another, the Father and Holy Ghoſt are denied, and Chriſt is all—the Father and Holy Ghoſt are but his attributes. The Catholic prieſt, who believes more of the Thirty-nine Articles than all the ſectaries in England, is doomed by law to death if he makes of a Quaker a child of the covenant by baptiſm; or prevails on an infidel to pray to Chriſt who died for him. *If the Tiber overflows its banks, if the Nile ſinks below its uſual level, if the plague deſtroys, if famine devours,* ſaid Tertullian, *the cry is,*

To

*To the lions with the Chriſtians**.—The Catholic is the only obnoxious being.

Ireland, my Lords, this inſtant reſembles a ſea agitated after a violent ſtorm. The moſt diſtant idea of the ſlighteſt penalty on the ſcore of conſcience, muſt alarm the Catholics of that kingdom; and give an opportunity to others to repreſent to them, that the Britiſh Parliament cloſing with a new penal law, is but the ſcene of a tragedy in which one act leads to another more diſtreſſing; that is to ſay, that this is but a preliminary to ſome other law more oppreſſive, when the Imperial Parliament meets, and themſelves are friendleſs on a diſtant ſhore: whereas, if in the Iriſh Parliament there were members hoſtile to their intereſts, there were others who pleaded their cauſe; and thus inſtead of an enlargement of privileges, they will have nothing to expect but an extenſion of penalties, ſuch will be the language of the enemies to the Union.

I know not, my Lords, whether this paper will fall into your hands before the

* Chriſtianos adleonem.

Bill is diſpoſed of. If it be already paſſed into a law, I diſclaim any intention whatever to cenſure the proceedings of the Legiſlature of the land, but ſhall, as in duty bound, ſubmit to its deciſions. But if it be pending before the Houſe, ſelf defence will, I hope, juſtify me in deprecating what I think obnoxious, and will anſwer, in my opinion, no end but that of creating diſtruſt and deſpondency.

In an age of profligacy, when ſo many wiſe and virtuous Members of the Legiſlature intended to introduce a new law for the ſecurity of the marriage bed; when divorces, inſtead of *conſtant affection*, are the frequent fruits of matrimony; amidſt ſo many ſeminaries of lewdneſs, and cities become, on account of vice and corruption, ſo many criminal Ninivites, which would require a Jonas to induce them to repent in ſackcloth and aſhes; ſtreets infeſted with lewd females, from the age of eleven to the period at which the effects of a crime that carries with it its own puniſhment, and the enormous number of which wretches, a magiſtrate who has written a book on the Police

of

of London, computes at fifty thouſand annually! Amidſt ſuch ſcenes of vice, is the chaſtity of a few Catholic women an object of ſo alarming a nature, as to deſerve the attention of the firſt Senate on earth, eſpeciallly as it is in their power to renounce their ſtate of celibacy when they chuſe? Perhaps not two hundred of them would bind themſelves to a ſingle life, in the ſpace of fifty years. If their number were multiplied to ten times, or to a thouſand times more, what are they when compared to the great number of the immoral and unchaſte all over England? About twenty or thirty atoms floating on the ſurface of an immenſe ocean. *Rari nantes ingurgite vaſto.*

Were it the cuſtom amongſt Quakers, Anabaptiſts, Moravians, or any other ſect or deſcription of people, to have women of a ſolitary caſt or diſpoſition of mind amongſt them, who from fanaticiſm or inclination, would chuſe to lead a retired life, and ſuperintend the education of the females of their ſects, Sir Henry Mildmay would rather admire than moleſt them. Why then harraſs, perplex, expoſe to the inſults of domiciliary viſits,

viſits, perſons of the Catholic perſuaſion? Why, amongſt ſuch a variety of ſects, ſingle the Catholics out as objects of perſecution? There are now no Catholic Pretenders to the Throne; when there were, not one of the Catholics of Ireland joined them, although they raiſed the ſtandard twice in Scotland, to aſſert their claim to the Britiſh Empire. The Pope, from a temporal Prince, is reduced to his primitive ſtate of a pious and edifying Biſhop; when he was powerfully armed with Peter's keys in one hand, and Paul's ſword in the other; when, in conſequence of temporal claims, ſuch as Peter's pence, &c. the gifts of former Kings, he exerciſed an authority which encroached upon the civil power, the Catholics of theſe kingdoms adhered to their allegiance, and repaired to the banners of their Sovereign. All former pretexts for perſecution being done away, what cauſe is there for perſecuting us now? It muſt be this pretended creed which fanaticiſm or prejudice has fathered, and which our hearts and actions diſclaim, *Prieſts ſelling abſolutions for all ſorts of crimes*, and millions of Catholics deprived of their civil rights on the ſcore of conſcience buying them.

them. For where there is no purchaſe, there is no ſcale.

Are we not Adam's children? Have not the Catholics the ſame ſenſations of pain and pleaſure as other men? Their vices and virtues, do not they run in the ſame channel with thoſe of their Proteſtant neighbours? Are they not animated with the ſame deſire of glory—allured by the blandiſhments of pleaſure—courted by the charms of riches—as earneſtly inclined to the enjoyment of eaſe and opulence? If perjury be their creed, if their clergy be endued with the magic power of ſanctifying crimes, and wafting their flocks to heaven on the wings of unrepented guilt, why do not they glide down the ſtream of legal liberty inſtead of ſtemming the torrent of oppreſſion? Why do not they qualify themſelves for ſitting in the Senate, and giving laws to the land, in concert with their countrymen, inſtead of being the continual objects of penal ſtatutes?

It is that they are diametrically the reverſe of what they are repreſented. Their religion forbids them to ſport with the awful name

name of the Divinity. They do not chooſe to impoſe on their neighbours or themſelves by perjury. Were it otherwiſe—were their conſciences of a more ductile texture, in three weeks or a month's time they would all read their recantations, and be on a level with the reſt of their fellow ſubjects. Yet the archives of national juſtice can prove that the Catholics of Ireland, reduced to the neceſſity of diſcovering againſt themſelves, preferred the loſs of their eſtates to the guilt of perjury, when a falſe oath could have ſecured them in their property. Notwithſtanding this imputed creed, they prefer the ſmarting afflictions of the body to the ſtinging remorſes of the ſoul; and when worldly proſperities ſtand in competition with conſcience, *they rather chooſe to be its martyrs than executioners.*

I have the honor to be,
Your LORDSHIP'S
dutiful and very
humble Servant,

ARTHUR O'LEARY.

No. 46, *Half-moon Street, Piccadilly.*
June 30, 1800.

POSTSCRIPT.

AS an additional refutation of the invidious report of converſions by the French clergy, it is to be remarked that the Apoſtolical Vicars do not permit them to hear the confeſſions or direct the conſciences of the Catholics of theſe kingdoms, though numbers of them know the French.

It is further to be remarked, that domiciliary viſits permitted to be made by magiſtrates to ladies ſecluded from the world, muſt wound their feelings in the moſt grievous manner. But if permitted at the diſcretiõn of magiſtrates to be made in the *night time*, they moſt humbly ſupplicate to be ſent back to be ſlaughtered by their mercileſs enemies, who martyred the ladies of the Abbey of St. Dennis.

Some words in the public papers, attributed to a Member of the Houſe of Com-

mons, who had ſaid to Mr. Wyndham, *that one would imagine he was revelling in the pleaſures of a nunnery,* muſt equally excite their alarms, and hurt their delicacy.

FINIS.

26 JY 66

ERRATA.

Page 14, *for* independent in, *read* independent on.
—— 24, *for* Cimbré, *read* Cimbri.
—— 44, *for* ſtand without cement, *read* ſand without cement.